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### UNH Increases Commitment to Meet State's Workforce Needs

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# NEWSROOM

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# UNH Increases Commitment to Meet State's Workforce Needs

Friday, March 9, 2018

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2018/03/09/UNH-INCREASES-COMMITMENT-TO-MEET-STATES-WORKFORCE-NEEDS)

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire unveiled a plan today to transform the Thompson School of Applied Science two-year degree programs by refocusing on the university's core agricultural heritage and incorporating a state-of-the-art, job ready, professional development and training academy. This will ensure UNH continues to provide its students with high-quality academic programs while remaining relevant and responsive to the evolving workforce needs of the state and the rapidly changing face of higher education.

A comprehensive four-year review of the Thompson School of Applied Science that included faculty, staff, administrators and external stakeholders has resulted in a number of changes intended to extend its 125-year history of educating students in two-year associate degrees.

"This refocusing and renewed commitment to the Thompson School will help ensure programs will meet the needs of employers, and provide more dynamic choices for students seeking hands-on learning and access to the wide range of career opportunities in animal agriculture, veterinary sciences and forestry," said Lorraine Merrill, member of the Thompson School Leadership Council.

Three of the Thompson School's two-year degree programs--forest technology, animal science with a livestock focus and veterinary technology with an emphasis on large animals--that best align with the mission of UNH's College of Life Sciences and Agriculture will be integrated more closely with four-year degree programs, allowing for increased opportunities for students. Four two-year degree programs will not be offered after 2019 as a result of changes in market demand leading to consistently low enrollment. A competitive scan of the current landscape found that 26 colleges, universities, technical institutes and community colleges in New England and New York offer similar associates degree programs to those being phased out and many of those are priced significantly lower.

A partnership with UNH Professional Development & Training will lead to an increase in offerings to better meet the demand from employees and employers for specific career and job ready skills. The number of short-term certificates awarded nationally grew by 151 percent in 10 years (2000-2010) and UNH is seeing a similar demand.

"It is critical that the university works to balance fiscal responsibility while remaining relevant in an ever-changing environment," said N.H. Commissioner of Agriculture Shawn Jasper. "Change is seldom easy, but I believe that these changes are necessary to insure the long-term viability of the Thompson School, while at the same time retaining areas of study that are of critical importance to the agricultural community in New Hampshire."

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH's research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

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